DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 277 875 CE 046 138

AUTHOR	Osbat, Luciano
TITLE	The Provision of Distance Learning in Italy (Summary Report).
INSTITUTION	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, Berlin (West Germany).
REPORT NO	ISBN-92-825-6523-8
PUB DATE	86
NOTE	40p.
AVAILABLE FROM	European Community Information Service, 2100 M Street, NW, Suite 707, Washington, DC 20037 ($4.00).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; Continuing Education; Developed Nations; *Distance Education; *Educational Demand; *Educational Innovation; Foreign Countries; Postsecondary Education; *Retraining; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS	*Italy

ABSTRACT

A study examined the volume and quality of distance training in Italy, the bodies most directly interested, and problems and trends. Two factors were singled out that not only led to greater interest in distance training between 1970 and 1980 but also to the first experiments being carried out--the economic crisis and the modernization process. The growth in demand for instruction and training from increasingly broad and new sectors of the population found the public sector incapable of responding appropriately in quantitative terms. Techniques used in the various experiments ranged from the use of very traditional methods (written materials) to others that seemed to anticipate the future (videodisks), from multimedia integration to the use of one aid alone, from measures that use only distance training to others that insert it in a broader context, together with course activities, mixing techniques from different systems. The provision of distance training seemed dominated by a concern to improve professional qualifications in both the public (teacher, vocational training trainers, civil servants) and private sectors. In the future, technological literacy is likely to be the object of most training. Among the anticipated innovations of distance training is the increased importance of the tutor and the fact that distance training experiments can be carried out at the same time as other study or work. (YLB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED277875

CEDEFOP Document

The provision of distance learning in Italy (summary report)

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

C Politi

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CE 046 138

CEDEFOP Document

The provision of distance learning in Italy
(summary report)

Luciano Osbat
Fondazione Giulio Pastore, Rome

First edition, Berlin, 1986

Published by:

CEDEFOP — European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training,
Bundesallee 22, **D-1000 Berlin 15**
Tel. (030) 88 41 20, Telex 184 163 eucen d

The Centre was established by Regulation (EEC) No 337/75 of the Council of the European Communities

This publication is also available in the following languages:

ES ISBN 92-825-6521-1
DE ISBN 92-825-6522-X
FR ISBN 92-825-6524-6
IT ISBN 92-825-6525-4

Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1986

ISBN 92-825-6523-8

Catalogue number: HX-46-86-791-EN-C

Reproduction is authorized, except for commercial purposes, provided the source is acknowledged.

Printed in Belgium

PREFACE

Distance learning is a relatively new field of work for CEDEFOP; our interest in this "field" is clear, however, from this study.

Some considerations underlie our interest:

The demand for training and vocational training is growing everywhere: this may be attributed only in part to a more widespread demand for on-going refresher training to meet continuous changes in production methods and machinery.

In addition to the growth in the volume of the training demand, new notions of quality are also playing a part; people are now more determined to choose training paths, methods, resources and contents which are better matched to the way in which they see their lives, their learning speeds and the time they have available for learning.

This training demand is also closely linked to the new and more complex social need to give a more central position to certain areas which are an integral part of daily life, such as time for individual cultural development, leisure time, etc.

Continuing training currently available has little connection with the quality of the demand and is also

somewhat limited in terms of quantity. It is estimated that the training available covers no more than one-third of potential demand (which contradicts principles of social justice as well as the need for collective growth in terms of educational levels and technological culture).

Increasing the quality and quantity of the 'continuing training' offered depends to a large extent on the availability and mobilisation of massive financial resources, making it increasingly necessary to find ways of extending the range of training offered while keeping costs down.

"Distance learning" would appear to provide an answer, not simply because it is a new development, but because its novelty allows it to be used in new ways for new purposes.

Although "traditional" correspondence courses historically provided the springboard for current distance learning ventures, they also led to deep-seated mistrust of this method of "training". The various ways in which different cultural areas see vocational training is a corollary to this. In German-speaking areas, work is "Beruf" (calling) and vocational training (Berufsbildung) provides a way of preparing for this calling which has a moral and social significance. The English term "vocational training", which also emphasises the notion of "vocatio" or calling, is close

to this, whereas this notion is foreign to Latin (or rather, catholic, in Weber's words) countries. The term "formare", borrowed in all probability from the plastic arts, has the sense of shaping individuals to conform to objectives and the set of values which society passes on through its schools.

No other institution has the hallmark of the society which creates it to a greater extent than schools. Schools are therefore seats of power. This explains the "mistrust" with which distance learning has always been viewed. Distance learning, in effect:

- moves training away, in geographical terms as well, from the place where it would "normally" take place, i.e. "at school",
- tends to replace a single public authority by a large number of agencies which are not always easy to identify or even control.

Problems of supervising the content of training dispensed by distance learning schemes and of validating results and recognising diplomas, are also created.

Although there is good reason to believe in the gradual improvement of the quality and range of distance learning available, the reservations and fears mentioned above will have to be overcome.

The aim of this study is to find out whether an overall "system", capable of co-existing with, and supporting,

other vocational training schemes for adults, can be discerned in the many schemes currently operating in Italy. A further aim was to find out whether and to what extent general trends towards change, on one hand, and the new technologies, on the other, were providing any incentive for an overall renewal of distance learning in Italy. The intention was to find out whether Italy was recovering lost ground as regards the more progressive and consolidated attitudes to distance learning in Northern European countries.

CEDEFOP, taking its proper stance, aims to find out whether and under what conditions fruitful cooperation between those responsible for and those who run distance learning schemes is possible within the EEC.

We hope that this report, drafted clearly and competently by Luciano Osbat, will be read by experts, those responsible for vocational training schemes, and those who run these schemes, and that this contribution to "knowledge" will provide an incentive for "action".

Duccio Guerra

INDEX.

INTRODUCTION Page I

1. THE OBJECTIVES AND METHODS OF RESEARCH ON DISTANCE LEARNING IN ITALY Page 1

2. DISTANCE TRAINING IN ITALY: AN ANALYSIS OF THE WAY THE PROVISION OF DISTANCE TRAINING IS DEVELOPING Page 4

3. DISTANCE TRAINING PROVIDED BY THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS Page 7

4. THE PROVISION OF DISTANCE TRAINING: FEATURES, OBJECTIVES AND INNOVATORY TRENDS. Page 20

1. THE OBJECTIVES AND METHODS OF RESEARCH ON DISTANCE LEARNING IN ITALY

Distance learning in Italy is a system for teaching and learning which as yet affects only a limited number of people, but the many experiments being carried out and the way some initial ventures are being consolidated clearly show that it is expanding rapidly. After starting as a correspondence school at the beginning of the century, distance learning saw the first experiments conducted in the period 1960-1970: radio and television were used for literacy programmes, while the next decade saw the beginnings of the first experiments in training activities aimed at a working audience and directed towards basic pre-vocational training or vocational refresher or qualification courses. Between 1980 and 1984 distance training had by now taken on a specific shape, differing increasingly from traditional teaching thanks to the use of more closely directed instructional techniques and through the use of specific tools (specially prepared material, audio-visual aids and software): it was in these years that the most important public educational institutions, big firms and organizations operating in the vocational training sector began first to look into it and then try it out.

Awareness of the considerable interest in distance training in Italy over the last fifteen years prompted an enquiry to find out what the volume and quality of

distance training in that country was, which bodies were most directly interested and which problems and trends could be identified in the very near future. When completed the research made it possible to define the types of distance training offered which proposed measures for broad sectors of the working population, aimed at creating new qualifications and updating existing ones, promoted both by public bodies (tne State, public authorities and the Regions) and by private bodies (firms and training agencies).

After the introductory stage, given over entirely to assembling and studying the bibliography available in Italy most directly concerned with distance training experiments already conducted or being carried out, interviews were held with experts in the sector, followed by others with key figures and then with those in charge of distance training measures. The initial study, and meetings with distance training experts and scholars, enabled us to single out the experiments considered most significant, viz. those already known to a wide public and which, by virtue of their objectives and the way in which they were carried out seemed to be the most worthwhile for the future development of distance training. However, the enquiry also dealt with firms carrying out training activities directly for their staff and bodies involved in vocational training, even if they had no direct experience of their own of distance training, to see how much attention they were

paying to it and check their programmes with a view to subsequent use of the system. In this way, the research completed did not merely show the most significant experiments and trials being carried out but also showed what the attitude of operators in the sector was concerning distance training.

The General Report drawn up is completed by a series of profiles drawn up for each body classified either as operating in the distance training sector or in any event interested in trying out training measures coming under that heading in the near future.

2. DISTANCE TRAINING IN ITALY: AN ANALYSIS OF THE WAY THE PROVISION OF DISTANCE TRAINING IS DEVELOPING

Distance training in Italy, as in other countries in which it has a longer tradition, is a complex phenomenon within which a distinction needs to be made between the demand and supply of distance training. There is a potential demand for distance training which is linked with the growing need for training which, because it does not find a suitable response on the market, remains unexpressed and therefore impossible to document. There is also a demand for distance training which has become clearly visible and is the only one which can be detected and assessed by en enquiry such as that carried out even if appropriate references to the previous type have not been neglected. There is moreover a whole range of bodies and institutions which on the basis of verified demand and sometimes in relation to assumed demand organizes a series of activities in the provision of distance training. The growing attention which the centres and institutes of social research in Italy pay to the development of training systems has not however as yet produced data which enable us to quantify sufficiently exactly the extent of the provision of distance training and its continued expansion. The study which CENSIS (the Centre for Social Investment Studies) has been carrying out for some years on the educational situation in Italy, prepared for the "Report

on the social situation" has gradually recorded and highlighted those training activities which can lead to distance training, without however providing quantitative data on the sector as a whole. It is therefore also necessary to refer to such elements in assessing the progress of distance training activities as can be ascertained, indirectly, from observing the continuing rise in the proportion of their incomes which Italians devote to satisfying their need for knowledge, from the audience sizes for cultural programmes on State and private radio and television, the increase in the sales of books and reviews dealing with training problems, the increasing number of institutes and bodies which provide training by correspondence and the growth of experiments in this sector.

Finally, mention needs to be made of the rapid growth in audio-visual tools and computer software available on the market, which, although aimed at providing information in all sorts of sectors and, where computers are concerned, providing support enabling them to be used more profitably for work, is not part of a training process based on distance training.

Withing the limits already mentioned, the enquiry carried out has made it possible to single out two factors which, in the years 1970-1980, not only led to greater interest in distance training but also to the first

experiments in the sector being carried out. The first was the economic crisis, which resulted in additional demand for training and obtaining vocational qualifications, justified by the need to alert workers to the possibility that they might lose their jobs and the need to increase opportunities for young people looking for their first job. The second is the modernization process concerning the State, particularly schools and the health services, which has led to experiments with distance training to provide suitable answers to new requirements. In both cases, the traditional system of vocational training is unable to give an adequate response to new training needs, because of the great number of potential users, the time required for the necessary re-structuring and, finally, on cost grounds.

3. DISTANCE TRAINING PROVIDED BY THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS

The growth in the demand for instruction and training from increasingly broad and new sectors of the population has found the public sector incapable on the whole of responding appropriately in quantitative terms, as was the case with the process of mass education in the Sixties. The State and its training structures are still marked by the stress of the constant quest to adapt services and staff to the sudden demand for instruction of the last twenty years. The Regions are struggling along the path to modernize and rationalize vocational training structures. Other local bodies are getting involved in extra-curricular training activities with growing expenditure commitments but are not authorized to act in the instructional and training sector on their own initiative. All this explains why they have paid so little attention up to now to distance training, and why the measures carried out which can be regarded as based on it are still at the experimental stage.

The State and the Regions have developed an interest in distance training in a very specific field: the training of trainers.

The complexities of the mass qualification programme for the teaching staff of compulsory schools (as regards both primary and middle education) in relation to the continuous innovations in teaching programmes but also with a view to obtaining a basic professionalism never previously achieved or tested, and the qualifying of teaching staff in upper schools in connection with the introduction of re-organization and new objectives for such schools (the reform of secondary schools which the politicians have been discussing for twenty years) prompted the Ministry of Education to carry out some distance training experiments on a very small scale in recent years. In cooperation with CENSIS, which was entrusted with carrying out the experiment, the Ministry introduced a distance refresher course on educational programming, for lower middle school teachers, and a second course on motor activities for elementary school teachers. In both cases learning was through self-instruction from written material prepared for both courses, with a number of intermediary and final comparisons and checks in the presence of tutors whom the training programme had been submitted to beforehand and discussed with.

Another experiment in refresher courses for primary teachers was carried out by the Ministry in conjunction with CISID, the International Study Centre on Distance

Learning, which is a subsidiary of "Accademia", one of Italy's leading correspondence school companies. The course, run in 1981, was aimed at assessing the validity of a training programme and material which "Accademia" had had on its books since 1977 for distance training on three series of topics: psycho-educational and teaching methodology, linguistic and expressional and logico-mathematical and scientific problems. Again, only written material was used, and there was tutoring together with checks on learning levels.

The Ministry of Education, together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, sponsored a pilot project of the Commission of the European Communities, entrusted to the editorial staff for multi-media and educational programmes of the Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana. The programme, called "Tra noi" (Between us) extends over a four-year course and is aimed at the children of Italian workers who have emigrated to French-speaking countries and want to improve their knowledge of Italian. It is a multi-media course, because in addition to specially written texts it uses documentary films, recordings and audio-visual aids: however, the concept on which the programme is based is that of a residential course activity, enhanced by the use of very varied and modern tools produced in Italy.

In other cases, the Ministry of Education, while not promoting distance training directly, has followed the work carried out by other public research and training agencies.

Another State body which has shown interest in distance training methods is the Higher School of Public Administration, which comes under the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. When the School called for tenders to provide distance training for 2 500 young people through correspondence courses, "Accademia" secured the contract in 1983.

These young people, engaged under Law No 285 of 1.6.1977 (and subsequent amendments and additions), are assigned to various tasks in public administration offices throughout Italy, and the course is aimed at providing basic vocational qualifications as a preliminary to specialization later.

All these experiments appear to have very distinct features, viz.:

- distance training is not chosen as a result of any particular positive assessment of its methods but in view of the results which can be obtained;

- the teaching tools used are the least costly (not that this means that they are in any way less suitable in achieving the objectives set);
- the factor which seems to be decisive in opting for the methods and tools of correspondence teaching is the low cost, both overall and per training service user, and the possibility of easily extending an experiment to a much larger public.

The experiments in distance training being carried out by other public agencies operating in the training and research sectors seem to meet different objectives.

FORMEZ, the Centre for Training and Studies for the Mezzogiorno, which comes under the Cassa per il Mezzogiorno, the Fund for the Development of Southern Italy, has for over ten years, in addition to its traditional courses, introduced a distance training system which has already gone beyond the experimental stage and is now used mainly for training vocational training trainers and administrative and technical staff in local authorities in the Mezzogiorno regions.

The topics already tackled include political economy, economic policy, labour, the State, water resources management and the re-organization of agricultural production.

The courses are backed up by printed material and visual and sound aids, ranging from slides with sound-tracks to film strips and videos. The programme requires the active presence of a teacher as group leader (although the courses were designed to be used at a distance), who first uses the course himself and then acts as the focal point for all the others taking part. Finally, the course includes group use of the audio-visual material prepared and the teacher's reports, with short individual sessions both to tackle points more thoroughly and for assessments by means of the tests included in the course documentation.

The distance training system devised by FORMEZ, which evolved in response to explicit requests for training encountered in the areas in which FORMEZ operates and amongst the people to whom specific refresher and specialization courses were offered by the organization, is aimed at providing people with basic skills as a preliminary to subsequent training, using the general method of "mastery learning".

Audio-visual methods were chosen in order to impart knowledge in the quickest and most effective way. Numerous experiments and checks were carried out on the type of tools used, taking into account not only the results obtained but also the costs involved for each type.

Behind the activities of the Educational Technology Institute of the CNR (the National Research Council, in Genoa), we find a group of research workers who are studying and experimenting with the application of technical means to education, and methods for planning and managing training operations, and who devise and experiment with instructional methods based on new teaching and learning models and on the new tools created by modern technology.

In 1978-1979, the Institute was the consultant on methodology for a course produced by RAI TV's Schools and Education Department, in co-operation with the Liguria Region, aimed at training and qualifying paramedical staff responsible for administering first aid and taking the injured and sick to hospital.

It was consulted on the choice of content, indicating objectives in relation to the various ability levels of the users, analysing learning methods (with a methodological approach to film strips and written texts), constructing the course in modular units (with each one including viewing a film strip, studying texts, classroom and field exercises, carrying out learning tests and distributing questionnaires for checks), devising and creating listening centres, and the final checking of the results of the experiment.

Still using audio-visual methods, but targeting a very different user public, the Institute ran a course on "What earthquakes are and how we can defend ourselves against them" in 1980-1982, in the framework of the CNR's Specific Purpose Geo-dynamical Project. Within the Project, there was a group responsible for mass education, varied according to whether it was directed towards schools, the public administration, public opinion or specialists. The Institute's course is aimed at higher middle school students and is intended to provide users with information appropriate to their basic knowledge which, however, reflects the specialist knowledge acquired within scientific institutions on the causes and locations of earthquakes and defence systems against them.

The Institute continues to co-operate with CEDE (the European Centre for Education) on the project "Introducing information technology in basic training", thus bringing to fruition a research and training planning project in the field which has lasted over a decade. It is now experimenting with an introductory course to IT in the area common to higher middle schools in five schools selected at random in various regions in Italy.

The work done by FORMEZ and the Institute for Educational Technology seems to be characterized by attention being concentrated on the results that can be obtained through distance teaching and learning and, in relation to such objectives, and developing further the tools to be used, which in any event will be audio-visual, with some openings towards IT. In both cases, the problem of costs has been taken into account, so much so that where cheaper audio-visual aids are as effective in projects to be carried out, they have been used in preference to videos.

Another factor shared by both institutions is that the organization of training around some specific topics took into account users' levels of knowledge, considered however in the abstract (vocational training trainers, paramedical staff, higher school students, and so on) instead of being assessed at the start of the experiment. Although this prevented higer levels of learning from being attained in some cases, it ensured that programmes could be applied to a very large public, of a uniform level of schooling and knowledge.

Italian universities have a long way to go before obtaining results in the distance training sector which are the fruit of regular programmes and not just experiments. The first endeavours in this field began

in the mid seventies when some support structures were set up which were intended to examine and carry out training measures through the use of television alone. The inauguration of the University of Calabria led to an experiment being started there, and subsequently to the creation of COSTED (the Association for the development of distance teaching technology), which does not yet however plan regular teaching activities.

Less still has been achieved through setting up, at Rome's "La Sapienza" University, CATTID, the Centre for the application of television and distance instruction techniques, which has not yet reached the stage of experiments on specific projects.

In 1984, at the initiative of some universities (including the two mentioned), research bodies and private institutions, a syndicate was formed in order to establish an Italian Open University, which has now made a start.

As regards public bodies, the circumstances are not yet favourable for proper expression to be given to distance training, although interest is growing and many experiments are being carried out, some of them significant.

Amongst these may be mentioned a project now at the experimental phase (with assistance from the European Social Fund) which involves RAI-TV's Programme Research and Experiments Office, in co-operation with the Regional Councils for vocational training in the Veneto, Umbria and Puglia regions, aimed at setting up regional systems for distance training.

Another is an Alitalia and Ancifap (National Association of IRI Vocational Training Centres) pilot project, assisted by the European Social Fund, which intends to experiment with the use of computers alongside traditional teaching methods in a training programme for a group of twenty youngsters who have qualified as air radio electricians and have been taken on by Alitalia for maintenance duties on electronic equipment.

The objectives pursued in the cases examined appear to be based on two different concepts. In the first place we see the use of technical resources and methods typical of distance training integrating, and falling within the framework of, traditional course activities. In the second place we see emerging the use of the technical resources of distance training, particularly computer use, to foster the image of modernity and adaptability to innovations which is the hallmark of companies, particularly those which operate abroad and are as a result in contact with companies from other

industrialized countries which use such techniques and methods in training.

Where private companies are concerned the provision of distance training is on such a small scale that it can be generally said that the sector has not tackled the problem.

The cost of any type of training prohibits small and medium-sized firms from acting directly, and so they are forced to entrust training activities to training institutions in the sector (in the case of industry, to ENFAPI, the National Institute for Vocational Training in Industry), to national associations in the relevant category or to associations at provincial or regional level.

There remain the large companies, which usually solve any problems which may arise concerning qualifications or updating internally and independently. The subject of distance training has not yet been dealt with in the training centres and schools of these firms.

Particularly strong interest can be seen in training agencies and research institutes in the private sector with regard to the advent of a distance training system; many of these have been privileged to promote or participate in experiments carried out by the State.

A great many training activities are prospering around computers, but are very rarely based on distance training methods. Most of what is on offer comes from the hardware manufacturers, with IBM in the lead, followed by Honeywell and then Olivetti. To some extent this is an activity which is aimed at training the purchaser or the user on the equipment sold, but is is often training aimed at stimulating interest in, and spreading knowledge of, the possibilities offered by computers to a public which might become the firm's clients in the future.

4. THE PROVISION OF DISTANCE TRAINING: FEATURES, OBJECTIVES AND INNOVATORY TRENDS.

It is practically impossible to outline the types of distance training from the point of view of the techniques used in the various experiments, which range from the use of very traditional methods (the written word) to others which seem to anticipate the future (videodisks), from multi-media integration to the use of one aid alone, from measures which only use distance training to others which insert it in a broader context, together with course activities, mixing techniques from different systems.

If we confine ourselves to identifying the approach in the quantitatively and qualitatively most significant experiments, there appears to prevail a distance training pattern centred mainly on specially-prepared written texts, backed up by short periods of tutoring in the introductory stage and the junctures between one stage and another of training, self-assessment cards and short assessment sessions of learning levels carried out by the tutors or the training planners. This pattern remains substantially unaltered even when the written text is complemented by visual or audio-visual aids such as slides, film-strips and videos: these tools enhance

and further consolidate what the written text proposes but are not able on their own to sustain the weight of teaching. In these activities, the teacher's role is not merely to assist but also sometimes to encourage and even in some cases to guide or assess the experiment being conducted.

The very wide use of audio-visual aids, together with other more traditional methods, seems to be a trend which will characterize distance training developments in the immediate future, thanks mainly to refresher and qualifying courses which may be introduced on a huge scale by public bodies and by the larger private firms. In this regard, particular attention will need to be paid to teaching experiments through television, since they appear to be, at least from the technical and economic point of view, the easiest to produce: the obstacle to this continues to be what has prevented a start being made up to now, viz. RAI-TV's indifference to this development in cultural and training programmes, the Ministry of Education's inability to solve day-to-day management problems and, lastly, lack of enthusiasm on the part of the universities for a type of teaching which is regarded as being coldly impersonal and unproductive.

The advent of computers, particularly personal and home computers, the sales of which have reached levels

unthinkable even two years ago, is a major unknown quantity of great importance to the organization of distance training in the nineties. The continually falling cost of hardware, the spread in educational software, the possibility of linking the systems and memory capabilities of computers to the wealth of images of videodisks may constitute such a strong stimulus that later on computers are chosen in preference to audio-visual methods, also because they can personalize training, something television cannot do and which is extremely complex, as well as expensive, with videocassettes.

It should be pointed out that these prospects for the use of computers cannot be regarded as trends already present in the current circumstances of distance training in Italy, except in the projects of academics and as implicit prospects in the most advanced experiments.

A constant concern which emerged to a large extent from the interviews conducted with key participants and those in charge of training measures was how to define what is meant by distance training and how to identify the objectives distance training is best suited to.

Without wishing to identify from all the positions which emerged a definition of distance training which embraces them all, it would appear that the opinion prevails of those who consider it to be a separate training system, a second path to instruction alongside the traditional, well-established one whose main feature is continuous communication between teacher and student.

The factors distinguishing this system, apart from the existence of a set of projects with an end in view, organized management, and a choice of materials linked to training measures - factors which are also common to other training systems - are the new ways of communicating between teacher and student and great flexibility, enabling a better response to be given to requests for training and to the learning time of each individual user.

The provision of distance training - again, with reference to the most significant experiments both from the quantitative and qualitative point of view - seems to be dominated in Italy by a concern to improve professional qualifications, in both the public (teachers, vocational training trainers, civil servants) and private sectors. Where schools are concerned this occurs because the demand for professionalism from both the suppliers and the users of training services is on a very large scale, as a result of the changes which have

taken place in their work as regards methodological innovations and the regulations concerning new programmes. It must also be said that the world of teachers and vocational training trainers offers incomparable possibilities for experiments with methods and content. Finally, it should be noted that within the state apparatus teachers represent the biggest body of workers, with powerful unions behind them, which have made the question of in-service training a cornerstone in their battles over salary agreements to improve pay, linking the professional qualifications of teachers to the possibility of higher earnings.

In other instances the State has found itself having to train staff engaged under exceptional circumstances in order to reduce unemployment amongst the young, for whom the entry qualifications required for certain jobs had been waived.

The public and private companies which have made use of distance training have not gone beyond use of the system with a view to creating a specific vocational qualification for staff already taken on. There do not appear to be any significant experiments being carried out to give workers new qualifications in industrial reconversion processes, basic skills training prior

to more advanced courses or technological literacy programmes, in contrast to what happens on a large scale in other European countries and in the West. All these opportunities for training measures are characterized by the dominating presence of residential course activities, carried out increasingly often with more modern general organization and the use of more up-to-date technical methods.

Over the next few years, however, it is technological literacy which seems likely to become the object of most training, using traditional and new systems at the same time in the organization of courses and with more emphasis laid on distance training as progress is made with experiments. This objective would appear to be of great importance not only in enabling the operators of IT equipment to adapt their basic knowledge, but also for a much larger public, caught up in the changes brought about by the technological revolution. In this sense they anticipate experiments which will become much more important in the future than those partly already carried out and partly still at the planning stage, which are directed at the world of schools and which endeavour to spread throughout Italy knowledge on the use of computers for training purposes, going straight on to the use of the new technology.

There are not any experiments which use distance training for general knowledge, although multi-media systems which include opportunities for self-instruction and the use of instruments, typical also of distance training, are already in operation and expanding.

Distance training is playing a leading role in the changes affecting training processes, particularly the different approach which is a feature of training measures, and the still excessive fragmentation which characterizes the demand for training. In some respects it is true to say that without the shift in attention from the teaching role to the problems of learning as the central issue in the training process, distance training proper would never have found the right terrain for development.

It seems to be capable of making contributions to educational innovations, as can be seen from the experiments and trials considered, particularly with regard to the use of aids and their internal structure. Aids have become instruments of knowledge, investigations, exercises and checks on the goals attained: together with the impetus of motivation, which sets learning in motion as part of self-training, aids are the basic tool determining the success, or lack of it, of the training measure. This is the reason for the printed "package", which combines various co-ordinated tools and includes the learning stages, background reading,

photographs and graphs which refer to and enrich the reading material, tests for exercises, cards and tests for checking levels, and so on. The package becomes a multi-media one, more worthwhile and more productive, when sound images and comments are added to illustrate details which are difficult to explain in writing or through photographs.

The figure of the tutor is bound to take on considerable importance in this type of training activity, and the tutor's role may represent an opportunity for comparison assisting the identification of the teaching function in traditional courses. A tutor's task is not restricted to introducing training measures, or validating the results obtained (which in fact is often not his job), because he is responsible for encouraging continuous interchange between users and organizers, until two-way communications are established.

Interest in tutors and in their duties is clearly apparent in all the experiments examined. Even when a tutor is selected from those who conduct training activities in the most innovative courses, his role within distance training activities takes on new characteristics.

A further innovatory element in distance training experiments is that they can be carried out at the same time as another activity, whether study or work.

This is undoubtedly nothing new for traditional vocational training, in which training measures are increasingly often incorporated in a work activity which continues, nor is it new for correspondence courses, which because of their specific features have also been used in conjunction with other training or job activities. It is however a new thing in the range of training activities promoted by the State or which involve civil servants.

This survey of the Italian distance training scene has made it possible to identify the prerequisites for the real and consistent development of this system in Italy, viz.:

- it is inconceivable that distance training will grow rapidly without decisive action by public authorities, in the first place the Ministries which are involved in training and immediately afterwards the Regions concerned with vocational training;
- it is vital for distance training to be given specific objectives, so that it does not become just another opportunity for training for those who already have access to ordinary opportunities, but instead enables those users to be reached who would otherwise be

excluded or provides people with skills and capabilities which can only be passed on through active teaching through images (videos and computers);

- it is also indispensable for training to become a product whose cost/effectiveness can be measured; in this light the particularly low costs of distance training carried out for substantial numbers of users will result in it being further appreciated and chosen where the results of training are equal in terms of efficiency.

Italy is the only industrialized country which as yet has no distance training system. The experiments conducted may now be regarded as having stood the test, and the time has come to take the first steps in setting up a system, benefiting also from the enriched knowledge that may be acquired from a thorough and continuous exchange of experiments with those countries which have longer traditions in this respect.

CEDEFOP — European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

The provision of distance learning in Italy
Luciano Osbat

CEDEFOP Document

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

1986 — 36 pp. — 21.0 x 29.7 cm

ES, DE, EN, FR, IT

ISBN 92-825-6523-8

Catalogue number: HX-46-86-791-EN-C

Price (excluding VAT) in Luxembourg:
ECU 4 BFR 180 IRL 2.90 UKL 2.50 USD 4

Venta y suscripciones · Salg og abonnement · Verkauf und Abonnement · Πωλήσεις και συνδρομές
Sales and subscriptions · Vente et abonnements · Vendita e abbonamenti
Verkoop en abonnementen · Venda e assinaturas

BELGIQUE/BELGIË

Moniteur belge / Belgisch Staatsblad
Rue de Louvain 40-42 / Leuvensestraat 40-42
1000 Bruxelles / 1000 Brussel
Tel. 512 00 26
CCP / Postrekening 000-2005502-27

Sous dépôts / Agentschappen

Librairie européenne / Europese Boekhandel
Rue de la Loi 244 / Wetstraat 244
1040 Bruxelles / 1040 Brussel

CREDOC
Rue de la Montagne 34 / Bergstraat 34
Bte 11 / Bus 11
1000 Bruxelles / 1000 Brussel

DANMARK

Schultz EF-publikationer
Møntergade 19
1116 København K
Tlf. (01) 14 11 95
Girokonto 200 11 95

BR DEUTSCHLAND

Bundesanzeiger Verlag
Breite Straße
Postfach 10 80 06
5000 Köln 1
Tel. (02 21) 20 29-0
Fernschreiber
ANZEIGER BONN 8 882 595
Telecopierer
20 29 278

GREECE

G.C. Eleftheroudakis SA
International Bookstore
4 Nikis Street
105 63 Athens
Tel. 322 22 55
Telex 219410 ELEF

Sub-agent for Northern Greece

Molho's Bookstore
The Business Bookshop
10 Tsimiski Street
Thessaloniki
Tel. 275 271
Telex 412885 LIMO

ESPAÑA

Boletín Oficial del Estado
Trafalgar, 27
E-28010 Madrid
Tel. (91) 446 60 00

Mundi-Prensa Libros, S.A.
Castelló, 37
E-28001 Madrid
Tel. (91) 431 33 99 (Libros)
431 32 22 (Suscripciones)
435 36 37 (Dirección)
Telex 49370-MPLI-E

FRANCE

Service de vente en France des publications des Communautés européennes
Journal officiel
26, rue Desaix
75732 Paris Cedex 15
Tél. (1) 45 78 61 39

IRELAND

Government Publications Sales Office
Sun Alliance House
Molesworth Street
Dublin 2
Tel. 71 03 09

or by post

Stationery Office
St Martin's House
Waterloo Road
Dublin 4
Tel. 68 90 66

ITALIA

Licosa Spa
Via Lamarmora, 45
Casella postale 552
50 121 Firenze
Tel. 57 97 51
Telex 570466 LICOSA I
CCP 343 509

Subagenti:

Libreria scientifica Lucio de Biasio - AEIOU
Via Meravigli, 16
20 123 Milano
Tel. 80 76 79

Libreria Tassi
Via A. Farnese, 28
00 192 Roma
Tel. 31 05 90

Libreria giuridica
Via 12 Ottobre, 172/R
16 121 Genova
Tel. 59 56 93

GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG

Office des publications officielles des Communautés européennes
2, rue Mercier
L-2985 Luxembourg
Tél. 49 92 81
Telex PUBOF LU 1324 b
CCP 19190-81
CC bancaire BIL 8-109/6003/200

Messageries Paul Kraus
11, rue Christophe Plantin
L-2339 Luxembourg
Tél. 48 21 31
Télex 2515
CCP 49242-63

NEDERLAND

Staatsdrukkerij- en uitgeverijbedrijf
Christoffel Plantijnstraat
Postbus 20014
2500 EA 's-Gravenhage
Tel. (070) 78 99 11

PORTUGAL

Imprensa Nacional
Av. Francisco Manuel de Melo, 5
P. 1000 Lisboa
Tel. 65 39 96

Distribuidora Livros Bertrand Lda
Grupo Bertrand, SARL
Rua das Terras dos Vales, 4-A
Apart. 37
P. 2700 Amadora CODEX
Tel. 493 90 50 - 494 87 88
Telex 15798 BERDIS

UNITED KINGDOM

HM Stationery Office
HMSO Publications Centre
51 Nine Elms Lane
London SW8 5DR
Tel. (01) 211 56 56

Sub-agent

Alan Armstrong & Associates Ltd
72 Park Road
London NW1 4SH
Tel. (01) 723 39 02
Telex 297635 AAALTD G

SCHWEIZ/SUISSE/SVIZZERA

Librairie Payot
6, rue Grenus
1211 Genève
Tel. 31 89 50
CCP 12-236

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

European Community Information Service
2100 M Street, NW
Suite 707
Washington, DC 20037
Tel. (202) 862 9500

CANADA

Renouf Publishing Co., Ltd
61 Sparks Street
Ottawa
Ontario K1P 5R1
Tel. Toll Free 1 (800) 267 4164
Ottawa Region (613) 238 8985-6
Telex 053-4936

JAPAN

Kinokuniya Company Ltd
17-7 Shinjuku 3-Chome
Shinjuku-ku
Tokyo 160-91
Tel. (03) 354 0131

Journal Department
PO Box 55 Chitose
Tokyo 156
Tel. (03) 439 0124

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CEDEFOP

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training,
Bundesallee 22, **D-1000 Berlin 15,** Tel. (030) 88 41 20

Price (excluding VAT) in Luxembourg
ECU 4 BFR 180 IRL 2.90 UKL 2.50 USD 4

OFFICE FOR OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

L-2985 Luxembourg

ISBN 92-825-6523-8